DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 285 362 EC 200 300

AUTHOR Walters, Joan T.
TITLE Results of Integrating Special Education Studies within Regular Baccalaureate Teacher Education on Teaching Behaviors in Regular Classrooms.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (65th, Chicago, IL, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication Skills; *Disabilities; Preservice Teacher Education; Professional Development; *Program Effectiveness; *Special Education Teachers; *Teacher Education; *Teacher Education Programs; *Teaching Skills

ABSTRACT

The study examined whether graduates and student teachers of a special education teacher education program were teaching in regular classrooms in a manner different than graduates and student teachers from the regular early childhood elementary education program. Questionnaires were completed by 120 graduates and 23 student teachers and the sample sorted into three teacher-training combinations. Field observations using the Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument were completed with competencies clustered around the general objective of graduating teachers who are competent, humane, and professionally involved. Data analysis revealed that more teachers with special education training used appropriate instructional methods and exhibited learner-centered communication behavior than those trained in regular education. Graduate special educators working in special education classes viewed their professional activities as closely related to their teaching, while regular education teachers viewed professional activities as working with the broader community. Results suggest that inclusion of specific special education preparation for general educators at the preservice level benefits the instruction of individual learners in the classroom. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED285362

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

RESULTS OF INTEGRATING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDIES WITHIN REGULAR BACCALAUREATE TEACHER EDUCATION ON TEACHING BEHAVIORS IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS

Joan T. Walters, S.C.
April, 1987

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Joan T. Walters
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (65th, Chicago, IL, April 20-24, 1987)

RESULTS OF INTEGRATING SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDIES WITHIN REGULAR BACCALAUREATE TEACHER EDUCATION ON TEACHING BEHAVIORS IN REGULAR CLASSROOMS

Joan T. Walters, S.C., Ed.D.

INTRODUCTION

A call for excellence in education is being echoed across the nation. Multitudinous studies, reports, and press critical of education and educational practices abound. The first such report: A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, speaks of educational conditions in the nation in terms of a crisis, urging reform (Passow, 1984). The improvement of teachers and teaching are the "heart of the matter", according to Boyer (1983). In fact most of the reports focus on upgrading teachers and improving the quality of their preservice experiences as central to the need for school reform (Sizer, 1984; Goodlad, 1983; The Education Commission of the States Task Force, 1983; Adler, 1983; The National Science Board Commission, 1983; & Sykes, 1983).

DIVERSITY IN CLASSROOMS

Although these reports emphasize the quality of teaching and teachers, areas noticeably absent from mention

are: attention to the problems brought about by "mainstreaming", the ethnic diversity of schoolchildren, and pluralism in our culture (Report of the National Coalition of Advocates for Students, 1985). Teachers need special competencies enabling them to recognize and respect the individual differences of handicapped youth in classrooms; the problems of the learning disabled and the bilingual student; the particular needs of the poor and minorities; the diverse needs of multicultural-multiethnic classroom populations; and the special needs of individual learners in general (Jarolimek & Foster, 1985). In fact these delineations reflect the populations in most of today's classrooms (Joyce, 1980).

Preservice Teacher Education Programs

Teachers emerging from contemporary preparation programs need to deal with the realities of today's classrooms daily. Are programs providing them with the competencies they need in order to effectively teach individuals? Some recent surveys report few changes implemented in response to changing classroom populations (Joyce, Yarger, Howey, Harbeck & Kluwin, 1977; Roberson, 1980; & Houston & Newman, 1982). Houston and Newman (1982) report that preservice teachers are only just beginning to experience new emphases in their preparation studies. Multicultural education and teaching the handicapped are relatively new content beginning to appear in teacher

education programs.

Teacher Education at the College of Saint Elizabeth

Over ten years ago the faculty of the Department of Education at the College of Saint Elizabeth implemented a new design for the Elementary Education major offered. Influences of both federal and state legislation regarding the inclusion of special children within regular classrooms prompted the decision to expand the teacher preparation program. The design adopted allows the enrolled preservice teacher two options: the Early Childhood Elementary Education Program (EEP) which leads to certification as a Nursery Teacher and an Elementary Teacher K-8 grades; and Early Childhood Elementary Education/Teacher of the Handicapped Program (EEPTH) provides another endorsement, based on the EEP certification as Teacher of the Handicapped. One course, Psychology of the Exceptional Child is required in the former program. In the latter, special education theory, methods, and clinical experiences are integrated into the professional courses and activities required in the EEP program. All teacher candidates select the option of their choice in the second college year. Figure 1 demonstrates these options.

THE PROBLEM

The question arises, a decade since the

COLLEGE OF SAINT ELIZABETH
TEACHER EDUCATION OPTIONS
FOR THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION MAJOR

EEP	EEPTH[a]

Freshman Year

Introduction to Education[b]

Sophomore Year

Psychology of the Exceptional Child[b]

Psychology of Learning Applied to the Child	Psychology of Learning Applied to the Exceptional Child
Behvior Observation and Curriculum Development in Elementary Schools	Behavior Observation and Curriculum Development in Regular and Special Elementary Schools
	Adaptation of Materials and Strategies for the Exceptional Child

Science in Early Childhood, Elementary Ed., & Special Ed.[b]

Junior Year[b]

Reading in E.Ch., El.Ed., & Sp.Ed.
Reading and the Language Arts in E.Ch., El.Ed., & Sp.Ed.
Art & Music in E.Ch., El.Ed., & Sp.Ed.
Phys. Ed. & Health in E.Ch., El.Ed., & Sp.Ed.
World Cultures & American Cultures
Fundamental Concepts of Math I & II
(Above courses include micro-teaching experiences in regular education classrooms)

Senior Year

Senior Practicum in E.Ch., & El.Ed. Senior Practicum in El.Ed., & Sp.Ed.
Institutions and Agencies for the Disabled

Student Teaching in E.Ch., & El.Ed. Student Teaching in El.Ed., & Sp.Ed.

[a]

Fig. 1. Plan for the professional sequence of study allowing for the Special Education option: Endorsement as Teacher of the Handicapped

[b]

EEP and EEPTH groups come together for these courses in the sequence.

implementation of this program of its effectiveness in terms of the difference between the professional performance of the regular and special education teachers. Specifically, did the initial teacher training in special education skills (EEPTH) have an effect upon the teaching behaviors of these teachers in regular classrooms, or do they simply demonstrate these skills in special education placements? Also, the question of whether teacher performance differences are a function of teacher status (graduate vs student), was investigated. The question was asked: are the observed differences in effect the result of experience and/or teacher training? For the purposes of this paper, however, only differences between training groups will be reported and discussed.

The specific purpose then of this investigation was to determine if the graduates and student teachers of the EEPTH program were in fact teaching in regular classrooms in a manner different from that of the graduates and student teachers from the EEP program. The following research question was explored: Are there differences in the professional performance of the teachers trained in EEP and those trained in EEPTH on observable dimensions of the general objective of the Department of Education "...to graduate teachers who demonstrate teacher competence, humane teaching behaviors, and professional involvement (Student Teachers' Handbook, p.1)?

METHOD AND DESIGN

The sample for the study was obtained by mailing questionnaires to 135 graduates and 23 currently enrolled student teachers. Graduates' return rate was 89%; all students returned theirs. The sample was then sorted to form three teacher-training combinations: ten EEP graduates and student teachers in a regular education primary classroom with an identified exceptional learner(s); ten EEPTH graduates and student teachers in a similar setting; and ten EEPTH graduates and student teachers in a primary level special education classroom. Figure 2 presents the design of the study.

	Teacher-Training Combinations		
	EEP	EEPTH1	EEPTH2
	Regular Teachers in Regular Classes	Special Teachers in Regular Classes	Special Teachers in Special Classes
Graduates	5	5	5
Students	5	5	5
Totals	10	10	10

Figure 2. The research design, including Ns of Teachers within groups.

N = 30; the sample includes 15 graduates and 15 students.

The Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument

In order to sample the professional teaching behaviors of the study participants the Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument (TPAI) was employed. The TPAI was designed by the Teacher Assessment Project (TAP) at the University of Georgia as an on-the-job assessment tool for certifying beginning teachers in Georgia. (Information relating to its organization, reliability, generalizability, and validity is available in the literature.) The TPAI was determined to be an appropriate assessment device for measuring the teaching behaviors of the study participants. The faculty of the Department of Education at the College examined the competencies and indicators on the TPAI with respect to the constructs and outcomes of the courses they teach. The members of the faculty agreed that the competencies identified in the TPAI related closely to course content, general goal, and transitional objectives of the Department of Education. An alternate form of the TPAI consisting of seven competencies with accompanying indicators was used. Figure 3 depicts the TPAI.

DATA COLLECTION

Six trained field observers collected the data. Four observers were adjunct teachers at the College; one was vice-principal of a special education school in New Jersey; the investigator was the sixth observer. None of the

Figure 3.

Summary of TPAI Organization for Discussion

I. PLANS INSTRUCTION TO ACHIEVE SELECTED OBJECTIVES

1. Specifies or selects learner objectives for lessons.
2. Specifies or selects learning activities.
3. Specifies or selects materials and/or media.
4. Plans activities and/or assignments which take into account learner differences.

II. OBTAINS INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEEDS AND PROGRESS OF LEARNERS

5. Specifies or selects procedures or materials for assessing learner performance on objectives.
6. Uses systematic procedures to assess all learners.

III. DEMONSTRATES ACCEPTABLE WRITTEN AND ORAL EXPRESSION AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT

7. Uses acceptable written expression.

IV. ORGANIZES TIME, SPACE, MATERIALS, AND EQUIPMENT FOR INSTRUCTION

8. Attends to routine tasks.
9. Uses instructional time efficiently.
10. Provides a physical environment that is conducive to learning.

11. Assesses learner progress during the lesson observed.

12. Uses acceptable written expression with learners.
13. Uses acceptable oral expression.
14. Demonstrates command of school subject being taught.

V. COMMUNICATES WITH LEARNERS

15. Gives explanations related to lesson content.
16. Clarifies explanations when learners misunderstand lesson content.
17. Uses learner responses or questions regarding lesson content.
18. Provides information to learners about their progress throughout the lesson.

VI. DEMONSTRATES APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

19. Uses instructional methods acceptably.
20. Matches instruction to learners.
21. Uses instructional aids and materials during the lesson observed.
22. Implements activities in a logical sequence.

VII. MAINTAINS A POSITIVE LEARNING CLIMATE

23. Communicates personal enthusiasm.
24. Stimulates learner interest.
25. Demonstrates warmth and friendliness.
26. Helps learners develop positive self-concepts.

VIII. MAINTAINS APPROPRIATE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

27. Maintains learner involvement in instruction.
28. Redirects learners who are off-task.
29. Communicates clear expectations about behavior.
30. Manages disruptive behavior among learners.

observers, with the exception of the investigator, knew in which program (EEP or EEPTH) the teacher was trained. The investigator collected data only from the special education sites. Each teacher was visited once by one member of the field observation team. An observation of the teacher's performance in the classroom during a morning session (approximately 3 1/2 hours) was made. A lesson in the area of Language Arts was a part of the session and contributed to the rating. The observer rated the teaching performance by circling descriptors under each indicator for each competency on the TPAI rating sheet. Indicator credit for each competency was determined through a pre-set formula used by the test designers. Competency credit relied on indicator credit.

DATA ANALYSIS

For the purposes of this study TPAI competencies were clustered around the general objective of the Department of Education, "...to graduate teachers who are competent, humane, and professionally involved." Competence is defined in TPAI terms: (Competency II) Obtains Information about the Needs and Progress of Learners; (Competency III) Demonstrates Acceptable Written and Oral Expression and Knowlege of the Subject; (Competency IV) Organizes Time, Space, Materials, and Equipment for Instruction; and (Competency VI) Demonstrates Appropriate Instructional Methods. Humane is represented by Competency V,

Communicates with Learners; Competency VII, Maintains a Positive Learning Climate; and Competency VIII, Maintains Appropriate Classroom Behavior. Professional involvement information was obtained from an analysis of items on a mailed questionnaire.

TEACHING COMPETENCIES

Inferential tests of the factor effects (teacher-training combinations) were conducted using an ANOVA comparing mean differences across training program (EEP, EEPTH1, EEPTH2). For Competency VI (Instructional Methods) results showed a significant main effect for the training program (F = 4.769, df 2/29, p = .01). Additional analysis using a Chi Square test comparing teacher group EEP with teacher groups EEPTH1 and 2 showed these groups to differ significantly (p =.01, $\hat{\rho}_{12}$ = -.19). More teachers with special education training were observed to use appropriate instructional methods than teachers with regular education training. No mean differences were significant for Competencies II, III, and IV

HUMANE TEACHING BEHAVIORS

Mean results for the variable communication skills (Competency V, Communicates with Learners) demonstrated a high level of performance for almost all EEPTH teachers and a low level of performance particularly for student regular

education teachers. Inferential tests (ANOVA) disclosed that for communication skills there were significant main effects across the training program ($\underline{F}$ = 4.870, $\underline{df}$ = 2/29, $\underline{p}$ = .01). Pairwise additional analysis between EEP and EEPTH teachers also indicated significant difference between regular and special education teachers ($\underline{p}$ = .01, $\hat{\omega}^2$ = -.389). When communicating with learners as described by the TPAI, fewer teachers without special education training achieved indicator credit than teachers with special education teacher training. That is, evidence demonstrated that more teachers trained in special education studies exhibited learner-centered communication behavior than teachers trained in regular education.

In the case of Competencies VII and VIII, maintaining positive learning climate and appropriate classroom behavior, results were not significant for the main effects of teacher-training combinations.

PROFESSIONAL TEACHER BEHAVIOR

Data for performance relating to professional involvement were drawn from the mailed questionnaire. Items relating to this aspect of professional performance probed subjects' own perceptions about the College experience that impacted on an individual's professional development and information on types of professional activities in which subjects were involved. Qualitatively, the results revealed that graduate special educators working in special education

classes viewed their professional activities as closely related to gaining resources for application to their teaching. Conversely, graduate teachers in regular education classrooms viewed their professional activities as working with the broader community. All student teacher groups described their professional involvement in terms of "participating in professional growth activities".

Eighty percent of EEP teachers indicated that the impact of preservice experiences at the College greatly strengthened their professional involvement, while 20% indicated only somewhat strengthened. For the EEPTH teachers the percentages differed slightly; 70% indicated greatly strengthened to 30% for somewhat strengthened. More regular education teachers viewed the impact of college experiences as having a very strong influence on their professional performance on the job relative to professional involvement, than did special education teachers.

IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The combination of regular and special education teacher training (EEPTH) at the College seems to account for an observed significantly high level of performance for at least two of the competencies examined: demonstrates appropriate instructional methods (in particular the discrete behavior, matching instruction to learner needs), and communicates with learners, along with one indicator from Competency VII (Maintains a Positive Learning Climate)

stimulates learner interest. These are presented in Figure 4.

Similarities between the teacher-training groups were observed for all the rest of the TPAI competencies. Reasons for these similarities could be accounted for by the College's program design and by the "generic" nature of these teaching behaviors. As explained before in Figure 1, the elementary majors take their professional courses as a cohort junior group. Theoretical study in the content areas and clinical experiences are accomplished together both on campus and in a lab school off campus. Furthermore, these teacher behaviors represent a sample of teaching skills needed by all teachers for all educational settings and learners. Corrigan (1978) listed a set of specific subject matter and skill areas he deemed "generic". The list closely resembles the TPAI competencies under discussion.

Although significant in some areas, results of this study need to be interpreted with caution. First, the study is quasi-experimental; second the focus is on teacher performance not effectiveness. Also controls built into subject and site selection due to the study's observation design led to a major challenge to obtain a large sample size. Parameters exist then on interpretation of results, especially when not significant. However, further investigation can be useful for program review and redesign at the College.

The results seem to indicate that the inclusion of

TPAI COMPETENCIES
WITH SIGNIFICANT MEAN DIFFERENCES
FOR TEACHER-TRAINING COMBINATIONS

V. COMMUNICATES WITH LEARNERS

Gives explanations related to lesson content
Clarifies explanations when learners misunderstand lesson content.
Uses learner responses or questions regarding lesson content.
Provides information to learners about their progress throughout the lesson.

VI. DEMONSTRATES APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Uses instructional methods acceptably.
Matches instruction to learners.
Uses instructional aids and materials during the lesson observed.
Implements activities in a logical sequence.

VII. MAINTAINS A POSITIVE LEARNING CLIMATE

Communicates personal enthusiasm
STIMULATES LEARNER INTEREST
Demonstrates warmth and friendliness.
Helps learners develop positive self-concepts.

Figure 4. TPAI Competencies with significant mean differences across teacher-training combinations (V and VI, and one indicator from VII).

specific special education preparation for general educators at the preservice level benefits instruction of individual learners in the classroom. At the College the EEPTH program reflects such inclusion. Efforts to move beyond mere compliance to federal and state regulations to quality are supported by the results of this study. Reynolds and Birch (1977) pointed out that regular teachers need preparation to accept the new responsibilities of special children in the mainstream. The faculty in redesigning the education programs determined that the combination of regular education and special education professional studies and field experiences for preservice teachers would enable teachers to provide the learning environment needed for the education of all children in regular classrooms. It appears from the data that redesign activities at the College could be directed toward the EEP program courses and field activities. Efforts to expand the preservice program for EEP teachers to provide for new competencies and well-integrated field experiences and studies might result in the performance of these competencies in regular, as well as special education classrooms (Vacc, 1978).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Four points are made relative to the implications of the results of the study:

1. The need exists to reconceptualize the competencies traditionally included in the professional

studies component of the preservice program, namely, at the College, and to include those which have been described (NASDTEC, 1983) as necessary knowledge and skills for teaching the learners in today's classrooms.

2. Further evaluation studies of graduate and student teacher effectiveness would provide meaningful data for program redesign.

3. The faculty at the College needs to spend some time at efforts to redesign the program.

4. The preservice program needs to provide experiences and core courses to address the changing nature of professional roles within the school community.

Results gleaned from such practice could provide preservice teachers with the knowledge, skill, and abilities to respond to the realities of cultural heterogeneity and individual needs of the children found in today's schools and classrooms.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adler, M.J. (1983). The paideia proposal: An educational manifesto. New York: Macmillan.

Boyer, E.L. (1983). High school: A report on secondary education in America. New York: Harper and Row.

Corrigan, D. (1978). The present state of teacher education and needed reforms. In M. Reynolds (Ed.), Futures of education for exceptional students: Emerging structures. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Education Commission of the States Task Force on Education for Economic Growth. (1983). Action for excellence. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 235 588)

Goodlad, J.I. (1983). A place called school. New York: Mc Graw Hill.

Houston, W.R., & Newman, K.K. (1982). Teacher education. In H.E. Mitzel (Ed.), Encyclopedia of edcuational research. (5th ed.). New York: The Free Press.

Jarolimek, J., & Foster, C.D. (1985). Teaching and learning in the elementary school. New York: Macmillan.

Joyce, B.R., Yarger, S.J., Howey, K.R., Harbeck, K.M., & Kluwin, T.N. (1977). Preservice teacher education. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education.

Joyce, B.R. (1980). The continuous process of school improvement: Lessons learned from the past. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification. (1983). Standards for state approval of teacher education. Salt Lake City, UT: Utah State Office of Education.

National Coalition of Advocates for Students. (1985). Barriers to excellence: Our children at risk. Boston: No. 350.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology. (1983). Education of Americans for the 21st century: A report to the American people and the National Science

Board. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 233 913)

Passow, A.H. (1984). Reforming schools in the 1980's: A critical review of the national reports. New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Teachers College Columbia University.

Reynolds, M.C., & Birch, J.W. (1977). Teaching exceptional children in all America's schools. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Roberson, J.R. (1980). Preservice changes in teacher education relative to mainstreaming. Teacher Education and Special Education. 3 (2), 387-390.

Sizer, T.R. (1984). Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Student Teacher's Handbook. (1981). Department of Education, College of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, NJ.

Sykes, G. (1983). Teacher preparation and the teacher workforce: Problems. American Education. 19, 23-29.

Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments. (1984). Atlanta, GA: Georgia Department of Education. Division of Staff Development.

Vacc, N.A. (1978). Preservice programs deficient in special education courses. Journal of Teacher Education. 29 42-43.